Social context in a collective IRAP application about gender stereotypes: mixed vs single gender groups

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BACKGROUND & AIMS

- The IRAP (Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure; Barnes-Holmes et al., 2006) is a procedure developed for the assessment of beliefs, attitudes and other implicit cognitive elements. It is related to Contextual Behavioral Science, specifically, to Relational Framework Theory.

- Stimuli related variables that influence IRAP performance has been studied, but not the influence of social situation variables of the test itself (an exception would be Barnes-Holmes, Murphy, Barnes-Holmes & Stewart, 2010).

- However, from a functional contextualist point of view, it is clear that the very social context in which the IRAP is administered (private vs public situation, academic vs leisure situation, peer vs teacher administration...) could influence the IRAP performance.

- Gender stereotypes are one of the implicit beliefs most studied with IRAP procedure (for example, Scanlon, McInteggart, Barnes-Holmes & Barnes-Holmes, 2014). Gender bias relational responses may be brought under the functional control of situational social variables, such as responding in a mixed gender group or responding in a single gender group (girls only/boys only).

- The IRAP is applied individually to avoid high attrition rates due to task complexity. Collective applications of IRAP would allow quicker and greater N’s research.

METHOD

- Participants: A total of 75 undergraduate participants (40 women and 35 men; aged 18-22).

- IRAP samples: For women: Me / men; For men: Me / women

- IRAP targets: Very attractive (Muy atractivo) / Not very attractive (Poco atractivo) Very straightforward (Poco lancado) / Very straightforward (Muy lancado) Very sexy (Poco sexual) / Very sexy (Muy sexual) Very provocative (Muy provocadora) / Not very provocative (Poco provocadora) Insecure (Inseguro) / Self-confident (Seguro) Weak (Débil) / Strong (Fuerte) Dependent (Dependiente) / Independent (Independiente) Worried (Preocupada) / Relaxed (Despreocupado)

- IRAP instructions: Consistent instruction: You must answer what you think is expected of each gender; Inconsistent instruction: You must answer the opposite of what you think is expected of each gender.

- Procedure:
  - Participants were invited to participate in a test about reaction times. No further details were given on the subject of the investigation.
  - The test was performed in a computer room with 20 seats. The 10 members of each group sat leaving a free seat between them.
  - After the researchers had read the instructions (available on request), the test began. One of the researchers was in front of them, while the other was behind them. No questions were allowed during the test.
  - In Experimental Condition 1, the test was applied in mixed gender groups composed by 5 women and 5 men. In Experimental Condition 2, the test was applied in single gender groups (girls only/boys only; 10 women or 10 men).

RESULTS


- One-sample t tests indicated that the scores of all the trial types for men and women differed significantly from zero.

- In the four experimental conditions, both men and women showed greater gender bias in single gender groups than in mixed gender groups. This difference reached statistical significance in the case of women answering consistent trials about men (t=2,624; p=0,014).

CONCLUSIONS

- The collective IRAP application is an interesting alternative to the usual individual IRAP applications. Although our attrition rate – around 30% surpasses the usual attrition rates of individual applications, it would reduce the time and increase the N’s of the experiments in an important way.

- The social context in which IRAP is applied influences the participant’s performance, although there are only a few studies focused in these variables.

- Gender stereotypes are present both in men and women. Gender bias is greater when people are in single gender groups and smaller when people are in mixed gender groups.

- Regarding the limitations of this study, it should be noted (1) the sociodemographic homogeneity of the participants – same sociocultural level, same age - and (2) not take into account variables such as gender identity or sexual orientation, which may be relevant.

REFERENCES

- Barnes-Holmes, D., Murphy, A., Barnes-Holmes, Y., & Stewart, I. (2007). The Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure: Exploring the impact of pros vs. cons and the response latency between pro-white and anti-white naming among white Irish individuals. The Psychological Record, 60, 57-96